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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/645,249	08/21/2003	Atsuo Takahashi	9281-4629	7554
7590	05/29/2007			
Brinks Hofer Gilson & Lione			EXAMINER	
P.O. Box 10395			KRAUSE, JUSTIN MITCHELL	
Chicago, IL 60610			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3682	
			MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
			05/29/2007	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	10/645,249	TAKAHASHI ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	Justin Krause	3682

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 24 April 2007.
- 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
- 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) Claim(s) 6-9,21-24 and 31-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) Claim(s) 6-9,21-24 and 31-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) The drawing(s) filed on 21 August 2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ . |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ . |

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on April 24, 2007 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 6-9 and 21-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 6 recites "a second opening is formed on an upper portion of the support member so as to form an opening...". It is also unclear if "a second opening" and "an opening" is directed to the same opening or two openings. The Examiner recommends removing the phrase, "so as to form an opening" from the claim.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

Claims 6-9, 23, 24, and 31 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Agetsuma (US 2002/0066658) in view of Miyako (US 2002/0033321).

Agetsuma discloses a steering switch for a vehicle comprising:

-a support member (4) which is mounted on a steering wheel (1), the steering wheel having an annular ring (1a) and spokes (1c) formed inside the ring;

-a manipulating knob (6) which is rotatably supported on the support member such that the manipulating knob is rotatable in front and rear directions of the steering wheel, the manipulating knob projecting inside a space surrounded by the ring and the spokes;

-a rotary support body (5) which is mounted on the support member and rotatably supports the manipulating knob; biasing means (15) which bias the manipulating knob such that the manipulating knob returns to a neutral position; and

-signal changeover means which are capable of changing over two kinds of electric signals in response to a rotational direction of the manipulating knob from the neutral position (paragraph 0010), wherein

-the manipulating knob, the rotary support body, the biasing means and the signal changeover means are integrally put together to form an assembled body (figure 4),

Agetsuma does not disclose the support member is formed by joining a front-side casing member which is arranged at a front side of the spoke and a back-side casing member which is arranged at a back side of the spoke, and wherein a housing

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which houses the assembled body therein is provided to one of the front-side casing member and the back-side casing member.

Miyako teaches a support member formed by joining a front-side casing member (4) which is arranged at a front side of the spoke and a back-side casing member (25) which is arranged at a back side of the spoke (11), and wherein a housing (12) which houses the assembled body therein is provided to one of the front-side casing member and the back-side casing member for the purpose of providing a structure to mount a switch on a steering wheel which does not need a bracket or screw and obtains a steady, stable mounting state of the switch.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to combine the steering switch of Agetsuma and mount it to the steering wheel in the manner taught by Miyako, the motivation would have been to provide a structure to mount a switch on a steering wheel which does not need a bracket or screw and obtains a steady, stable mounting state of the switch. The support member has a space (within the annular ring) into which at least one spoke is inserted when the front side casing member and the back side casing member are mounted to the at least one spoke.

The combination created by Agetsuma and Miyako contains two openings, a first opening into which the spoke is inserted when the front and back side casing members are mounted to the spoke (as shown in Miyako), and a second opening formed on an

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upper portion through which the manipulating knob is projected from the support member (as shown in Agetsuma).

Regarding claim 7, the housing has a positioning portion (21) on an inner wall of the housing, the assembled body being insertable into the housing so as to position the assembled body with respect to the housing is mounted.

Regarding claim 8, the housing is formed on the back side casing member.

Regarding claim 9, the housing has an insertion opening for inserting the assembled body into the housing at a position which faces the front side casing member. The housing is mounted on the back side of the spoke, therefore the open side (insertion opening) faces the front side casing member.

Regarding claim 23, the front side and back side casing members are connected by snap fitting (see Miyako fig 3).

Regarding claim 24, the front side casing member and the back side casing member are directly connected to the at least one spoke (See Miyako fig 3).

Claims 21, 22, 32 and 33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Agetsuma and Miyako as applied to claim 6 above, and further in view of Castleman et al (US Patent 6,131,946).

Agetsuma and Miyako do not disclose the spoke comprising an upper and lower spoke.

Castleman teaches a spoke with an upper spoke and a lower spoke (14, see fig 5) for the purpose of supporting the steering wheel.

It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify Agetsuma to include a spoke comprising an upper spoke and lower spoke for the desired purpose of supporting the steering wheel as taught by Castleman.

Regarding claim 22, Regarding claim 22, the support member includes a reinforcing portion (Miyako 22) which divides the space into a space corresponding to the upper spoke and a space corresponding to the lower spoke and bridges between the front side casing member and the back side casing member.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Justin Krause whose telephone number is 571-272-3012. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Richard Ridley can be reached on 571-272-6917. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

JMK
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Thomas R. Hannon
Primary Examiner